The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

The long-expected and longed-for event has happened. Germany has bowed to the inevitable with an ill grace and accepted the terms of the Allied and Associated Powers. The formal signatures to the Peace Covenant will bring to an end one of the most trying and eventful periods in history. With unspeakable thankfulness to Almighty God we accept the desired result. The time of anxious expectation, of searching trial and travail is at length over, and an era of peace is vouchsafed to sorely-visited humanity. But not alone as an end to war do we welcome peace. It will, we fondly hope, mark a new beginning, and bring us together in the pursuit of new, peaceable ideals. The sense of oneness compelled by the pressing needs of self-defence will surely not fail us when we realise, and become responsible for, the opportunities and undertakings of the new age. Delayed reforms, constructive schemes for town and country, wide-reaching plans of national importance and utility will now demand attention and whole-hearted support. If it were true that in the time of war each of us needed to do his bit, it will be no less true in the time following upon the war. We cannot hope for security or national stability without earnest and persistent endeavours on the part of all sections of the community. May the response to the call of peace be at least as great as it was to the call of the war.

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To many hearts and homes the signing of peace will bring painful and poignant recollections. How can we forget those who went forth in the strength and ardour of their young manhood to serve their motherland! They went, not knowing whither they went, glad to go, and they came not again. Henceforth certain spots in France or Flanders, in Palestine or Mesopotamia, will be holy ground, and many a sad pilgrimage will be planned in forthcoming days. With all who have lost loved ones we would express once again our heartfelt sympathy, but let them remember in their sorrow that without the sacrifice there would have been no sequel such as we now accept with grateful, relieved hearts. Whatever outward memorials we may create, these will be but expressions of that inward pride and satisfaction we feel for those who dared and endured to the uttermost that the world might be secure for us and for freedom. As a Church, we may mark our appreciation of our young men, but nothing we can conceive or carry out could increase the profound thankfulness of our hearts

that so splendid a response was made by our young soldiers and sailors. In comparison with that, no chapter of our ecclesiastical history will have more enduring appeal and value. We say that now in all sincerity, since we cannot at this time dissociate the victory and its sequel from the splendid sacrifice which preceded both and made them possible.

* *

Our Annual Meetings passed off very successfully, and the attendances at all but the earlier gatherings were good. We would have liked to see more people present at the United Service conducted by the Moderator. As yet we hardly seem to realise that the occasions of our assembling together as a united Church are so few that we should make the most of them. There is an inspiration in numbers that we ought more frequently to receive than is at present the case. But the various meetings on the second day were all better attended than those on the first. Perhaps the reason of this was the visit of Dr. Mellone, and those attracted by that fact were certainly fully repaid. His address at the Social Service Meeting was most practical and appropriate, and the result should be the accession of new members to this recently-started organization. But perhaps our greatest indebtedness to Dr. Mellone is represented by the exceedingly thoughtful and suggestive lecture delivered on the Wednesday evening. It was listened to by a very satisfactory audience with close and eager attention. The ideal of the Church which he set forth is one that should appeal to all and create a deepened desire for its realisation. We are grateful for all the visitor said and did, and hope the influence of his inspiring appeal will be long and widely felt amongst us.

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The re-election of the Rev. Alfred Turner as Moderator marks the general appreciation of his desire to be of benefit to the Church, and also gives expression to the feeling that his special objective, the increasing of the capital of the Sustentation Fund, should have his continued advocacy and practical support. The object has already received the strong approval of the laity, as is shown by the existence of a Laymen's Committee. But Mr. Turner was the proposer of a particular scheme for raising money, and he is therefore appropriately commissioned to see it through. We sincerely hope he will get what he deserves, viz.—a sustained and whole-hearted backing. To make his efforts successful will be not merely to help the ministers in their hour of need, but also to strengthen the Church itself. It is futile to expect the best from men who are distracted by financial stress and anxiety. To relieve them of a pressing monetary strain is to free their minds for higher service and more fruitful thought.

APOSTACY FROM UNITARIANISM.

II.

Jesus gave his disciples no creed. He added to the burden of their minds and consciences no new dogma. He pointed to no former teaching, whether of religion or morality, as authoritative for its venerable age or for its venerated origin. He who is said to have taught with authority, that is, not as a mere copyist with strict restraints of bit and bridle to liberty of exposition, like the orthodox scribes of ancient Jewry or the orthodox presbyters or priests of modern Christendom—he who taught, not as a copyist, but himself an author (or *increaser*), added no new knowledge; only (and who can measure how great a thing this is), he added a new mode of knowing. Search through all vestiges of his vocal utterance for details of his own theology or ethics, and what doctrine do we find that was not in the world before he came to it? But, as a connoiseur or expert, who discerns and appreciates the qualities of different works of art or different specimens of divers classes of commodities, can educate the untrained faculties of others to a like capacity: so Jesus showed his disciples how to test the reality of religious truth, not by reference to accredited doctors of theology; or to define the duties of requisite righteousness not by the light of any

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particular document, but by using for themselves the mental and spiritual faculties that are common properties of human beings. He prescribed no doctrine for belief nor any rule for conduct that he alone could discover in any height above, or in any remote region under heaven, inaccessible to the unaided intelligence of his brethren upon earth; he did but teach them how to read and interpret for themselves such law and doctrine as was inscribed already upon their hearts as well as his. Did any doubt the providential loving kindness of the heavenly Father? let him consider the tokens of it, which he that runs may read in the exquisite grace and lovely glory of the lowly herbage, and the happy subsistence of the little heeded birds. Did any lose heart under the oppressive sense of helplessness in sin so as to suppose that he was Godforsaken—that for him God was as if he were not? Let him bethink himself of days gone by when he sought to do his heavenly Father's will; and he should call to mind his then sensation of the nearness of the Holy Spirit, approving, comforting, strengthening, rewarding him—taking up its abode with him. Then he should become aware that it cannot be the will of his Father which is in heaven that even one of such seeming little account as he should perish. In such wise did Jesus, like a Son of God who had known what it was to be in the bosom of his Father, open the eyes and understanding of the blind, enabling them too to discern in themselves the children of God: thus has he shown them their Father.

To all who hunger and thirst after righteousness ,or are burdened with the weight of unsolved questions of belief and conduct, and, instead of being lightened and refreshed, are but exhausted and depressed by the wearisome prescriptions of duty and perplexing and unnatural creeds of such doctors as proud priests, or self-sufficient presbyters and arrogant scribes, whether of the old time or the new, whose doctrine is as meat that perisheth, or bread that satisfieth not, or water such that whosoever drinketh it shall thirst again, Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls, For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The method of the unitarian disciples of Jesus is the method of their Master. They repeat no confession of faith; they accept no creed. They acknowledge no authority in any teacher, save such as is self-evident like the authority of Jesus himself. They believe in the efficacy of no magical rite of ordination essential for the ability to expound the truth or to perform religious offices. Their ministers, teachers, preachers, prophets—good, bad, indifferent, are known by no sign or seal impressed upon them; but, like the vine and fig tree, thorn and thistle, by the fruits they bear. They have recourse to no scriptures and no tradition and no person for essential confidence on any vital points of their religious faith. In the way of scriptures and of persons, the Bible itself, sacred, informing, inspiring, helpful though it be, is no exception on the one hand; and Jesus, surpassing as he has done, every other man and all humanity collectively as being before and above all things the foundation of their believing, their aspiring, their endeavour is no exception on the other. For God is not a fetish or a talisman potent to help those only who conceal his name in a locket on their person or profess to retain his presence in a shrine. He is a living God. In living contact with each one of us, he gives to each who asks it of him, his Holy Spirit, which can enlighten any of his children as it enlightened his Son Jesus Christ, to comfort us by guiding us to truth. It is only through that informing and unfailing guide that any one may know what word or thought is true, whether of Jesus, or his own, or of some other.

The apostate from Unitarianism cannot trust his Master's method, which is to take the verdict of one's own experiences. So little satisfied by the

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evidence of his own spiritual senses, he craves for *knowledge* where he has lost *faith*.

A Book for the Month.

"The Century of Hope."

Thoughtful people who are not content to take their opinions ready-made from their favourite newspaper have been compelled by the events of the last four years to read up a little history in order that they may get some light on the origin and meaning of the great war. It was no mere accident that plunged the world in bloodshed; the causes of the war are all to be found in the various movements of modern civilization. The tragedy of 1914-18 and the present well-nigh universal unrest are natural results of antecedent events and movements of thought. The more thoroughly we realise this the greater appears the boldness in giving to the century from the Battle of Waterloo to August, 1914, the title, "The Century of Hope." Yet if we remember St. Paul's words, "Hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," and if we look again on F. G. Watt's beautiful symbolic picture, "Hope" we can understand.

"The Century of Hope," by Mr. F. S. Marvin, is a wonderfully concise and clear survey of European history in the last hundred years. As readers of "The Living Past" know Mr. Marvin is no dry-as-dust historian, he has a remarkable power of generalization, an extraordinary knowledge, broad sympathies, a judicial temper, a sure instinct for the vitally important, a keen appreciation of the significance of the thoughts and actions of men, and a fine literary style. History is not a mere jumble of unconnected events: it is an ordered progress, and its study should help us to the attainment of a proper perspective. The spirit of Mr. Marvin's book may be gathered from the following passage—"We have been living for the future, and living in hope. Whence comes this assurance, and on what do we rest this hope? It is not a blind or instinctive confidence; and no undeniable external voice has in this recent period revealed it to us. We must unquestionably find the food for the belief, the impulse to the future, in the deeper knowledge and understanding of the past that has developed with it. It is an age of history as truly as an age of hope. And history has taken shape in the same years, no longer as a statement—true and well explained as may be—of what took place at any given epoch in the past, but as the revelation of an illimitable upward process in which mankind and all creation are labouring together from moment to moment and age to age. History in this full sense is also the child of the eighteenth, the adolescent of the nineteenth century. And history has helped immeasurably to fortify the early hopes of reformers by showing that, imperfect as we are and blood-stained as our path has been, we yet have risen already from a lower state and have it in us to advance to one still nobler. A life which hope can turn to, but to be won by effort and hastened by stronger effort—this is the guarantee of history."

In the short space at our disposal it is impossible to attempt either a summary or a criticism of "The Century of Hope," it is our intention rather to direct the attention, especially of the young people, to an exceedingly instructive, interesting, and helpful book which should dispel some doubts and inspire a needed confidence in human nature. When we think of the enthusiastic idealism of Shelley and Wordsworth, and the reasoned optimism of Tennyson and Browning, to mention some only of our own poets, when we recall the prophetic writings of Ruskin and Carlyle, when we note the immense stride which the nineteenth century made in knowledge and invention, when we remember how commerce promised to bind mankind into a vast brotherhood and the growing sentiment in favour of peace and the

impulse towards liberty and fraternity everywhere apparent in the century of hope, and then face the fact of the great war and the disordered state of so many countries at the present time, we have need of some splendid assurance that man is indeed "the heir of hopes too fair to turn out false." We believe Mr. Marvin has supplied this assurance, and the careful reading of "The Century of Hope" will prove to most people to be at once stimulating and steadying. The Book is packed with good things, and is sanely optimistic. The chapters on "The New Spirit in Literature," "The Birth of Socialism," "Religious Growth," and "International Progress" are of outstanding value.

THE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE NON-SUBSCRIBING CHURCH.

The proceedings of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, which took place on Wednesday, 18th June, began with a Communion Service at 10-30 a.m., in the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast. It was conducted by the Moderator, the Rev. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick, with the assistance of the ministers of Killinchy and Cairncastle, Revs. D. J. Williams and Eustace Thompson respectively. At 11 o'clock the chair was taken by the Moderator, who constituted the meeting by prayer. His Scripture Lesson, the well-known passage of Deutero-Isaiah beginning—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," was chosen by the Moderator with a view to the main subject of his

OPENING ADDRESS.

In this he refered to the sense of relief which came upon the world when the issue of the long-drawn conflict with the European criminal in the signing of the armistice on the 11th of November last brought clearly within sight the certainty of deliverance and the further signature of peace which we were now daily expecting. He spoke in feeling terms of the heavy contributions which so many had been called upon to make towards the great price of victory. He went on to speak of the deplorably disappointing state of anarchy, frivolity, selfishness, sordidness, and vice which for the time being had supervened, and exhorted the Church to do their part to save the world from falling and to enable it to rise to that high level for the sake of its attainment to which our soldiers and sailors had fought and died. He referred to the evident consciousness of responsibility on the part of the Christian denominations in general, and to the only definite measure towards the equipment of the Church for the reconstruction of society hitherto brought prominently forward, namely—the consolidation of the ranks.

That ideal of unity might be good just so far as it went, but after all, as he said, "If we march forward to the conquest of all the vast evil of the world equipped with an armoury of obsolete doctrines which have their proper setting in the middle ages with little or no relation to present-day thought and conceptions of life, then a united Church has not much promise of taking us any further than the present disunited sections have taken us," and an antidote will sooner or later be demanded, "namely, the first-hand teachings of Jesus, totally clear of all the tangled mass of doctrine with which they are intermixed."

Turning to domestic affairs, the Moderator mentioned, amongst other matters, the recent formation in the Synod of a Union for Social Service; also the appeal that had been made to the Congregations to increase their stipends.

One or two observations on the last-mentioned matter may not be out of place, by the way, even here. It is of real importance, of dimensions strangely unrealised as yet by the majority of the laity. A readiness to respond to the appeal referred to has been quite general, and a point most highly appreciated by the clergy,—such as it was, the response was quite cheerfully made. But there are questions which the

laity have not perhaps asked themselves with sufficient thoughtfulness. For example, is the augmentation of their individual contributions towards the maintenance of their clergyman anything like proportionate to the increased price which their clergyman himself, as well as they are forced to pay for food or raiment and for every indispensable utensil of daily life? Is it true that so many of them consider that his ministerial life and service throughout the year are really sufficiently valued by them at the price of a couple of pounds of butter, or a couple of sacks of potatoes, which is all they give him? Or is it a fact that it is not poverty of imagination, but poverty of purse which makes it impossible for them to afford him any more? Do they really suppose that the pulpits of the land continually falling vacant with the effluxion of time can be filled with a continuous succession of men of a suitable type as regards education and other qualifications if the average hire they can expect to receive is inferior to that of a Belfast tramway man, or many an artisan whose occupation requires relatively small mental and social training such as are ordinarily vaguely felt, even where they are not definitely reckoned, to be needful for the make-up of a useful minister.

BUSINESS OF SYNOD.

The answers to the roll represented a proper attendance of the clergy of the respective Churches, but, as usual, an inadequate attendance of lay representatives. It is true that much of the business to be got through is more necessary than interesting, yet it is a pity that there should not be present on principle a lay representative for every Congregation, even though some might not have the same opportunities as others for contributing to the safe guidance of affairs by aid which a layman's point of view or a layman's experience alone can give at times.

Mr. Turner, for the sake of the part he had taken in good work accomplished in the previous year, was unanimously re-elected Moderator upon a motion of Rev. G. L. Phelps, seconded by Rev. J. A. Kelly. Mr. Slipper, who had already held the office for seven successive years, was re-elected Clerk—"no man", as Rev. H. J. Rossington observed, "having worked harder than he." Rev. J. A. Kelly was also once more elected Treasurer, being assured by his brethren that there was no one more competent for that office. Whilst accepting it, he urged the appointment of a lay successor.

The question of the personnel of the new General Purposes Committee led to some discussion, in the course of which Mr. Ervine made a remark to the effect that a feeling was abroad that the laity had insufficient representation on ecclesiastical committees, but felt discouraged from seeking participation in affairs which the clergy were inclined to regard as their own concern and to keep to themselves. There was no lack of ministerial fervour to dispel this, which, to the knowledge of most people and of all our clergy, could only be a complete illusion. It is a constantly reiterated clerical complaint—that the laymen are too few who can see their way to leave business of their own on the relatively few occasions for the transaction of business of the Church. However, partly as an outcome of the remark of Mr. Ervine, a proposition moved by Mr. Phelps was carried unanimously to the effect that the General Purposes Committee should in future consist of the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer as ex-officio members, and twenty others, ten clerical and ten lay members, one-fifth of whom should retire annually and be ineligible for an interval of one year.

A decision was agreed to with reference to the York Street Congregation that it be an instruction to the General Purposes Committee to take the state of it into consideration.

Rev. S. E. Bowen resigning the Convenership of the Sunday School Association, received the thanks of the Synod for his past services on its behalf in that connection. Rev. E. H. Pickering was appointed his successor.

Mr. Pickering, who is also Convener of the recently formed Union for Social

Service, gave a report of its aims and the activity it had up to the present engaged in and pleaded for increased financial, and especially increased personal suport.

ADJOURNED MEETING.

The motions, notice of which had been handed in in the morning, were dealt with when the Synod re-assembled in the afternoon. The Rev. John Barron led off with a notice of motion on Primary Education, whilst another was by Rev. G. Slipper on the question of increasing the capital of the Sustentation Fund.

The motion, which aroused the most interest (owing to the style of advocacy of the mover, Rev. G. L. Phelps and the seconder, Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, and not impossibly in some measure to the style of opposition of the dissentients, Rev. E. H. Pickering, who proclaimed himself a "drinker on principle," and Rev. W. G. Marsden also a drinker—though of ordinary, unpretentious, and we are sure of the *extremely "really temperate"* kind) was one in support of total abstinence and of local option.

After this, Rev. J. A. Kelly, who has hitherto been known to be more solicitious for the creature comforts of his fathers and brethren, allowed himself to be carried away by his own eloquence in advocacy of an appeal from the Hibernian Bible Society, insomuch that he absorbed two-thirds of what had been designed to be the allotted interval for tea. Even so, many more moments of the precious remainder of that time were undemurringly (if not exactly merrily or cheerily) surrendered by a few faithful men to the necessary process of auditing the minutes of the day.

CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SERVICE.

After tea there was a conference on Social Service, which was held in an upper room of the Central Hall. The audience were doubtless stirred to good purpose by the animated appeal for the attention of Church people to the work-a-day needs of the world, and an exhortation to bring their religion to bear upon all questions of the proper construction or reconstruction of society. The chief speaker was the Rev. Principal Mellone, M.A., D.Sc., of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, and formerly a highly esteemed minister of the Non-Subscribing Congregation at Holywood

DINNER AT THE OLD CASTLE RESTAURANT

At the Annual Dinner, at which it is needless to say, Dr Mellone was the principal guest, there were four toasts—The King, the Churches ofthe Non-Subscribing Communion, "Our Colleges," and the Moderator By way of expression for the brimming gratitude of the whole company for the faith-inspiring presence and speaking of the honoured guest, it occurred to some one to start singing "For he is a jolly good fellow," but whilst the suggestion was obviously recognised by every one for its good intention, there was (who could venture to conjecture the precise explanation of the doubtless somewhat complex cause?) a singular inability to adopt it and carry it out Perhaps it was felt that there was something incongruous in the terms of the song as applied to that particular guide, philosopher, and friend—for all that, he certainly was a "fellow," "good," and "jolly"—"which nobody can deny." Any way, the song may be said to have collapsed; and the abortive effort drew from Dr. Mellone the disparaging remark (which only caused, as it was intended, reflection and a smile), that if the evidence just given of their capacity for song were proportionate to their capacity for work it did not augur well for the future activity of their Church. Very shortly afterwards the same mode of honouring the Moderator in his turn was resorted to with all the appearance of universal spontaneity and with a totally different result, for every one, as if by telepathic, and undoubtedly it was by sympathetic, consent, sang his best and sang right well; so Mr. Turner, with his characteristic sense of humour, as if this had been the only vocal exhibition of the occasion, observed that if that proof of the ability to sing were proportionate to their ability to work it was the best augury for the achievements of his second year

of office, a remark which was cordially appreciated, and by none more so than by Dr. Mellone himself.

THE LECTURE.

The subject of Dr. Mellone's lecture, which was delivered in Rosemary Street Church, and which, after much that had been good, was distinctly the best wine reserved to the end of the feast, was "The Place of the Church in Human Life." What had the Churches of Christendom been doing, asked the lecturer, during the past five hundred years? They had been fighting against progress of scientific knowledge, and had endeavoured all through that time to keep religion by itself as an interest apart from the interests of the common daily life of the world. During the world tragedy of the four years of war what part had the Church played: what effort had it made to redeem the world, to reduce it to harmony, and to refine it from the awful evils that had brought about that vast calamity? There had been individuals who by their actions had stood out as noble exceptions to the indifference, incompetence, or inertness of the majority, but the result remained that the spiritual influence of corporate Christians was never in the course of history lower than it is now. That was a confession that had been made by valued members of all bodies included in the Christian Church.

Yet man is a creature of many hungers. He has that hunger of the body in all its forms which betokens him to be one with other creatures sharing the animal world. He has a hunger of the mind, the wondering about his surroundings which begins with his beginning and lasts to his end, the desire to know about things, and the longing to know what is beyond these things and what is beyond this life. Thirdly, there is the hunger for affection, for the response of heart to heart. Finally, there is the hunger for God—a longing which no possible tie or place can satisfy—which one man might not have found in himself by himself, but of which all are conscious in the common humanity from which no man can detach himself as a mighty force. Everywhere and at all times their temples, pilgrimages, and writings had been called into being to contribute to the attempt to make clear the issue of this hunger for God. There has been no force more potent nor more incessant in its action in the shaping of human affairs than that same hunger for God. It could be no accident and no delusion that had made it a force to bring about all that it had done. What does it mean but that there is a call for the organised life of humanity in which there must be a sinking of individuality for the sake of the wider life of all? Why not try to live in utter isolation? Any one so doing would prove the impossibility of living in such circumstances a human life at all. Human nature demands a Church with specific functions, times, and places and representations. It was not to be supposed that the Church would become extinct as being an effete institution. The Church was an eternal thing. Those of the auditors who took thought and care for it might rest assured that they were working at no delusion off the lines of human nature: they were playing the game of the Eternal Father which they and God should win.

As for the particular group of Churches which had created them, and made them what they were, to which they owed the best of which they might be capable, they were of a Presbyterian type. That should mean that theirs was a Church shaken free from priests; the idea of priesthood being the absolute ascendency of the clergy in the Church; whereas, although Milton's saying that Presbyter is but Priest writ large has been too often true not only etymologically, but actually. Presbyterianism properly stands for the essential co-operation of clergy and laity in the life of the Church, the minister being only a ministering elder, affording leadership indeed, but in a human sense, not in a priestly one.

As a Church, they did not take the Unitarian name. Ten years ago a considered refusal to do so had been decided upon. Events have shown they were right. The vast majority of them were Unitarians, hence they

were all so described. But if all their Church stood for were certain negations of theological statements the world had no use for them. Again, if they stood for certain positive statements about our Lord Jesus Christ—if they had nothing to offer but theological propositions *about* something, even about Jesus Christ, the world had no use for them. The lecturer said that the man who had once defined the Gospel of Jesus Christ as meaning the Fatherhood of God applied to the whole of human life not merely believed in and discussed, but *applied*, had defined the very heart and soul of Unitarianism. Let them therefore grip the definition and advance that Gospel which was theirs as being conscious of the increasing urgency of the demand for it in the world—"Show us the Father."

He urged them to throw overboard all accretions, and not to lade their theological ship on the principle of a great Church in Ireland as described to him some years previously by one of its adherents ,who had told him that they considered it necessary as in the bestowal of cargo to keep it safe and unshifting in mid-ocean by filling up much space around it with comparatively worthless material or "stuffing."*

Finally, he exhorted them in a way that must have thrilled especially every ministerial member of the audience not to give way to discouragement in the circumstances of their endeavours, but on the principle of the old Greek brotherhood, to band themselves together to carry on the torch of truth, so that if any should fall by accident or under stress of circumstance another should be ready to receive it from his hand and bear it on, confident that sooner or later, though they knew not where or when, among them they should find its destined resting place to which they should succeed in bringing it, the flame still burning.

ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETINGS.

The meetings were not attended as they might have been, as they should have been, and as one who did not know what not to expect would certainly have expected that they would be. Why not? Are the members of the Church really dead? Surely not? On this occasion, as related above, some of them did not like it to be thought that they could not sing. Finding themselves on their mettle, they had been sensible enough to prove that they could. Next time, therefore, at the next Annual Meetings let them all take care to prove that their Church is alive. Let those who are near come not by dozens and scores, but by hundreds. And let those that are far off come by tens and dozens. If they come they will receive much inspiration for faith, and what is more, will be able to increase it for others. Surely that would be worth while? For what could not be done for the Gospel, for Ireland, for the Empire and the world by a little faith, if so very little could remove a mountain.

*The Church in question whose methods and principles of stewardship of the truth was thus described was not the Church of Rome.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

The refreshing showers in the afternoon of the first Saturday in June were very welcome, but it was unfortunate that it should be the day of our Annual Sunday School Conference. Larne is a considerable distance from most of our Churches, and trains and railway fares are not what they used to be, hence the comparatively small attendance. Perhaps there were 200 present, but not more.

Our Moderator, Rev. A. Turner, presided, and, prior to his taking the chair, the proceedings were opened by a welcome to the Conference by Larne's esteemed pastor, Rev. J. Kennedy, who also conducted the devotions.

Mr. Kennedy is youthful in his enthusiasm for the spiritual welfare of the young, and has very definite views of the kind of religious food that should be given to the child.

Mrs. J. Glynne Davies, of Banbridge, was the appointed speaker, and, in an admirable address on "Child Study and the Sunday Schools," she indicated

some of the things to be observed in our working for the objective of a definite religious experience, resulting in the good life. In the first place, we must give due attention to individuality of the child, for each has a peculiar possibility of its own, and there are other kinds besides the "mealy-faced" and the "beef-faced." Again, we cannot give to any child of whatever age he might be religious truths as they exist in our own minds, for the adult's religious experience is unsuitable to the child. Our starting point must be the child's own experience, and a study of the child's mind will suggest methods suitable to the cultivation of his sense of religion. Heredity and environment, though factors in the making of the child, do not enter the sphere of morals. They do not determine the goodness or the badness of the individual. Good and evil owe their existence to constant re-creation. The in-born tendencies are neutral—to be cast on the side of good or evil according to the influence brought to bear on the child's mind, when at an early stage the child's moral faculties are wakened. He derives his first glimmerings of the idea of right and wrong as a rule from his social relations. Example is one of the first factors to influence a child's character, for very early he is a hero-worshipper. Each successive stage in his development requires its own treatment—of a kind that will make demands on his growing faculties, and directed continually to the cultivation of the religious experience. Definite religious teaching should also be given, and the distinctive and important points of Unitarianism should be indicated.

Rev. M. Watkins led in the discussion, and he emphasised the far-reaching influence of the faithful, sympathetic teacher, who, though he be a stranger to the most modern methods, is revered by the pupils because they have learnt to know that their teacher always does his best for them, and does it joyfully.

Mrs. Slipper, Revs. H. J. Rossington, G. V. Crook, E. H. Pickering, and G. L. Phelps also joined in the discussion. Mr. Pickering advocated the systematic training of Sunday School teachers, and appealed to the Church to think of this important matter.

Before the close, the Convener read the results of the Essay Competition and intimated that the first prize was awarded to Herbert Pullin, age 12, and the second to Bertie Gingles, age 11, both pupils of Larne Sunday Schools.

Tea was subsequently served by our Larne friends in the schoolroom, and our sincere thanks are due to Mr. Kennedy and his congregation for the admirable way in which they entertained the Conference.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

Four Interim Lessons on Man.

General Note. These lessons are not part of the scheme, but are only to be used where the Sunday School is not closed for any summer vacation. Where the school is closed, they should be omitted. For most of the following notes on these four lessons I am indebted to the "Lesson Notes" for October, 1911, published by the Manchester District Sunday School Association.

July 6th. Man—The Learner. Read I. Samuel iii. 1-10. Key text, Proverbs xxiv. 51.

1. *Man must learn that he may live.* He is born the most helpless of creatures. As he grows up he has to learn how to get food, clothing, and shelter, or he would die. For an extreme case of the necessity for learning in order to live, take Robinson Crusoe, who, cast on an uninhabited island, had to learn from the very bottom how to provide for himself. Fortunately he had learnt much beforehand, and was able on that foundation to make wonderful progress. But, supposing a tiny child were cast on such an island, having to learn everything for himself, he would grow up an ignorant savage. The child needs the help of others in order to learn. From his parents and teachers he is

able to learn all those things which will make him a clever and useful man. Children, instead of wasting their time, should be thankful that they have the opportunities of such learning. They can learn what the greatest men in the world have only discovered with the greatest difficulty and even danger. To every child the world throws down the challenge: "I am a big fellow, but you are very puny." The child, as learner, can reply: "I have five senses and a mind, and I shall soon be able to find out some of your secrets. Besides, great men have lived before me who have found out many secrets, and at school and in books they will tell me all about them."

2. *Samuel—The Learner.* He was a good learner, because (1) He was *obedient* to *discipline*, heeding old Eli's command. (2) He was humble, saying, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth He was willing to believe that other folk could teach him something. (3) He had a good motive, being anxious first of all to learn what God was pleased to teach him. He was not anxious to learn merely to boast or to get prizes. So we come to our key text. "A man of knowledge increaseth might." Samuel became the most powerful man in his country, because he was the most willing and capable learner.

3. *Man must also learn to live eternally* One thought we must get clearly fixed in our minds—that we are in this world because God has put us here. He has put us here that we may learn how to be worthy children of Him, because He wants us to live with Him for ever. So that, although it is very necessary to learn how to get food, clothing, and shelter, it is even more necessary that we should learn how to get that which will nourish us for eternal life. We have to be good, and need to learn how to be good. 1. One way we learn is from the voice of God which speaks within us, and gives us a feeling of right and wrong. 2. But to help us understand that voice something else is necessary. Samuel, for instance, heard a voice, but did not know what it meant, until Eli explained the matter to him. Samuel heard Eli, but we are much more fortunate in that we have Jesus Christ. His wonderful life shows us what goodness is and helps us to understand more clearly the promptings of our conscience.

July 13. *Man—The Worker.* Read Exodus xxxv. 30-35. Key text, Prov. xiv. 23.

1. *Man is by nature a worker.* Judging from some children, this may not seem quite true. Instead of doing the little work that is expected of them, they get into *mischief*. Now, mischief is nothing but misapplied work. Hands, muscles, senses, brains—all indicate that nature meant us to work, and that we cannot be really happy in idleness. In this respect we are like all animals, who, although we may not think it, work hard for their living. But they work instinctively. The tailor bird, for instance, sews his nest in exactly the same way now as tailor birds have sewn for countless years. Man, however, is endowed with mind so that he can choose and develop and progress in his work. Our duty as human beings is to do the best we can with our abilities, even the humblest and weakest having a part to play in making the world better and happier. *e.g.* The parable of the talents. The fault of the man with one talent was not that he had only one talent, but that he did not use it. We should take a pride in our work. If we black boots, let us black them well; if we have some lessons to do, let us do them well. In no case ought we to want to be idle. Somebody has to work that we may live, and it is better, if we have health and strength, to work for ourselves rather than impose on others. The key text tells us that in all labour there is profit. This profit is not only the money or the things got by work, but the satisfaction of feeling ourselves useful and independent.

2. *All good work is divine.* Consider the Scripture lesson. Bezaleel is a good workman, and is said therefore to be filled "with the spirit of God." The more we work the more are we like to God. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Jesu

was a great worker, and God is a great worker. He has always worked, and never ceases. If for one moment the Divine activity stopped we should all be extinguished. It is God also provides all things for us, and we cannot possibly claim to be His children unless we join with Him in the work. His chief work is to have us all perfect as He is perfect. Accordingly the best work we can do is not that which merely feeds and clothes us, but that which makes us nobler, purer, and more loving, and helps those about us to be the same. *Teachers* may find helpful illustrations in Hans Anderson's "Something," the hymn, "What shall we children bring," and for elder scholars Milton's sonnet on his blindness, and Browning's "Pippa Passes." These all enforce the point that all service ranks the same with God, that is, all service breathing His Divine Spirit of charity and sincerity.

July 20th. Man—The Admirer. Read Job. xxxvii. 14-24. Key text, Job xxxvii. 14.

1. *The sense of wonder.* The purpose of this rather difficult lesson is to show how many things there are in the universe which we cannot understand, yet can wonder at and admire. This ability of ours to wonder and admire is the means whereby we are lifted up to a higher plane of life. The animals do not see anything wonderful in the stars, the coming of springtime, the lightning and the storm, the sunset, the songs of birds, and the beauties of flowers. But man does, and thus the Greeks, to distinguish man from the animals, call him "The upward looker." The most impressive thing in the whole universe, however, is not the mysterious force and majesty of nature, but the sense of right and wrong and the spirit of love and devotion which we see in man. There, above all, is the Divine power at work; there we see God at His most wonderful. Think of our Lord, and, how sitting near the Treasury of the Temple, he singled out as the most wonderful sight of all a poor widow dropping her two mites into the box. Poor and starving though she was, the spirit of devotion within her led her to give her offering to God. Only a truly Divine power could have so moved her and led her to triumph over all our selfish, earthly needs. Jesus proved his greatness by being moved to wonder at the sight, and if we would be like him we too shall feel wonder and admiration at such sights.

2. *What to admire.* We cannot help admiring things. Anything out of the way is likely to move our wonder. Therefore the more ignorant we are the more likely are we to give our admiration to unworthy things. The ignorant savage marvels at a piece of glass or a gun; the silly boy gloats admiringly over the deeds of some showy villain; the foolish man or woman admires the glamour of wealth and position. But such admiration does not lift us very far, and may degrade us very low. God has planted the sense of wonder in us to uplift us, to make us realize how great is His power and His love, and accordingly strive to be worthy of it. We see God in His highest form in the wondeful works of nature, in the deeds of heroes and martyrs, in the love that makes a home happy, in the companionship and under the instruction of those who aim at nobler things than we ourselves. John Ruskin said, "Seek rather the company of archangels than that of men," by which he meant that we must look upwards, and not downwards, at the beautiful, the true, the loving, rather than the flashy, the corrupt, the selfish. Only by looking upwards can we be filled with true reverence for God, learn His will, and so learn to understand ourselves and our duties.

July 27th. Man—The Discoverer. Read Numbers xiii. 17-29. Key text, Matthew vii. 7.

1. *Experiment.* A child tries to walk, takes false steps, makes mistakes, gets bruised, and finds out which is the right way to walk. So man discovers from his mistakes how to walk the way of life rightly. Also a child pulls things to pieces to know how they are made, is endowed with mind that reasons, that seeks to understand how and why. The inventor experiments, *e.g.*, Watt and steam engine, Stephenson and

locomotive, Marconi and wireless telegraphy. The chemist experiments, *e.g.*, Priestly and oxygen, Galileo and the earth's rotation round the sun, Sir Isaac Newton and the law of gravitation—all these discoveries help man to a greater control of life.

2. *Man and the Unknown.* New truth always existed in the unknown before man found it, *e.g.*, Columbus and America, Livingstone and Central Africa, the discoverers of the North and South Pole, etc. Then there are new worlds of thought in science, morality, and religion always awaiting man's enterprise. God has a reason or purpose in everything, and man seeks to know it. Persistent endeavour is the open sesame of the door of the unknown Man has to find *causes.* Crime is abolished by removing causes. Wars and every sort of quarrel will be ended by the discovery of ways of reconciliation.

3. *Discoveries about Man's nature.* Man discovers the workings of conscience, and that its pain, when wrong is done, is a Divine warning of the destructive results of evil ways. He finds in himself a mine from which he may dig out wonderfully valuable treasures of thought, love and experience. As he considers the lives of the noblest men and women, they reveal to him how much he has yet to attain to. He is led to believe in eternal life because he sees that his nature requires an eternity for its full developement.

4. *The greatest thing to be discovered* is God's plan of the perfect life; how to make life even more perfect in one's self and for others. Jesus encourages us in this quest, and promises a great reward. "Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you; "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known": as a treasure hidden in a field, as a pearl of great price, are men to hunt after this Kingdom of God within man, as well as in the heavens. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (of outward good) shall be added unto you." E. H. P.

Memorial Notice.

MISS ISABELLA M'ROBERT.

We regret to announce the death of Miss Isabella M'Robert, of Drumaghlis, which took place on May 27th. For a considerable time her health had been unsatisfactory, though until lately the fatal nature of the malady was not realised. During the last year it became only too clear to those who noticed the change in her appearance that something serious was wrong. She fought bravely, however, against the approaches of the disease, and did not acknowledge to anyone her illness until circumstances made it absolutely impossible to longer conceal it. Her spirit was stronger than her body, and when many would have taken to bed and demanded nursing and attention, she continued to discharge her household duties. She was thoughtful for the other members of the family, and did not like the idea of giving trouble. Suddenly the end came, just after she had risen from bed and before she was able to leave the room. The loss to her sorrowing relatives cannot be exaggerated.

In the Congregation of Rademon she will be almost equally missed. Her attendance at worship was most regular. She never sought excuses for staying at home. Whatever the weather might be, her pew was occupied. She withheld neither her strength nor her means from the support of the Congregation of her fathers.

She was also interested in such gatherings of Unitarians as the Sunday School Conference, and when the meeting happened to be held within a reasonable distance, she was sure to be present. A more loyal supporter of our simple faith could not easily be found. Unfortunately she is the eleventh member of Rademon claimed by death inside the last twelve months.

We tender to her sister and two brothers, niece and nephew our most sincere sympathy.

Reports.

Antrim.—A very successful two days' Bazaar was held in the Protestant Hall, Antrim, on May 30th and 31st. The object of the enterprise was to clear off a debt incurred by the purchase of a new manse. Favoured with delightful weather and the entire patronage of all the denominations in and around Antrim, its success was assured. It was opened on Friday at 3-30 by Mrs. Campbell, of Castle Upton, the Chairman being Rev. Dr. West, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly. On Saturday it was opened by Mrs. Irwin, the Chairman being Mr. R. T. Scott. It was gratifying to see such unity in connection with that old historic Presbyterian Congregation. Mrs. Campbell reminded us in her unique address that it was just 300 years since Rev. John Ridge was ordained as its first minister in July, 1619. Rev. Dr. West appropriately spoke of his intimacy with many of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian ministers of by-gone years, and the pleasure it gave him to assist them on this occasion, and Rev. Dr. Irwin voiced the growing volume of feeling for such unity when he said "that this united gathering was a happy omen of greater union in the near future, when he hoped the various branches of the Presbyterians in Ireland would forget their differences and unite in one Presbyterian body as a step towards a greater union of all the Protestant Churches." In every way the pastor and his wife, Rev. Geo. V. and Mrs. Crook are to be congratulated on the successful issue of their undertaking. The debt is now a thing of the past, the Bazaar having realised almost £300—thanks to the generosity, friendly co-operation, and practical sympathy, not only of our own members, but of those belonging to the other Congregations in Antrim who so cordially united with us in making the Bazaar such a success.

* *

Belfast: First Church.—The Annual Sunday School Excursion assumed fresh features when held on June 21st. Instead of the usual brakes, now almost impossible to get, the large party of young people, parents and friends, travelled by train to Kilroot early in the morning. From Kilroot the journey was made on foot, under ideal conditions, to Castle Dobbs, where the beautiful grounds and fields had been generously placed at our disposal. The weather, doubtful at first, was perfect for the walk and also for the subsequent proceedings, and was responsible for one of the most successful excursions for many years. One serious danger threatened—a shortage of provisions——but the neighbourhood yielded abundant supplies, and even the clamorous hunger of the young and energetic was appeased. Mr. Robert M'Crum and Miss Laird, with many willing helpers, saw to the commissariat. While the older members of the party strolled in the glen or along the lake side, the scholars put their energy into football and other games. Later, with unabated energy, they contested in the sprint or the high jump, yielded ground reluctantly in the tug-of-war, and proved their prowess in other stern contests. The competitors included persons from the age of four upwards. Needless to say, even their superabounding energy has its limits, and on the homeward journey the weary ones were numerous. Still, one and all agreed that it was a glorious day, unmarred by any accident or mishap of any kind, and we are grateful to all who in the preparation or in the actual proceedings contributed to so delightful a result.

* *

Ballyclare.—On Saturday, 14th June, leaving by the 8 o'clock train in the morning, our Sunday School scholars and a few members of the Congregation took their Annual Excursion. We went to the Bank Heads, Larne. Being warned by the stormy weather of the previous day, we were prepared for the worst by taking our mackintoshes and umbrellas. As if to reward us for our caution, the weather was gloriously bright and hot. Some of the children paddled. It was a great and full day. We had a meat tea in Holden's hotel grounds, and left about 6 o'clock. It

was unanimously voted to be one of the best and most enjoyable excursions we had ever had.

If by 7 p.m., Monday, 23rd June, wise counsels prevail, and the Germans decide to sign the Peace Terms, then on the Sunday following, at 3-30 p.m., in the First Presbyterian Church, Ballyclare, will be held a unique service. It will be a Service of Thanksgiving and Praise for Peace. But its uniqueness will be in the fact that the ministers of five denominations will take a part in the Service; these will be the Rector, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist, with our own minister preaching the sermon. The Praise will be led by the well-known Orpheus Male Choir under the leadership of Mr. S. Holmes.

* *

Templepatrick.—Information has been received from Mr. F. J. Bigger, Trustee in the matter, to the effect that the late James Hamilton, of Carngreine, Templepatrick, has left a sum of £1,000 to the Rev. Alfred Turner and Dr. John Campbell, in trust for the four Non-Subscribing Congregations of Templepatrick, Antrim, Ballyclare, and Crumlin. Deceased also bequeathed a sum of £250 to the Orphan Society in connection with the same body. The Hamiltons have been connected with the Congregation of Templepatrick for generations.

In connection with a Company of Girl Guides (made up of girls of all denominations) Captained by Miss Getty, a very successful concert was given by the girls in St. Patrick's Barn, Templepatrick, on Friday night, 20th June. On the day following in the same place, and under the same auspices, a highly successful American Tea was given, when Miss Getty was heartily supported by the ladies of Templepatrick and district. Sales were brisk and the half-hour concerts and dances were liberally patronised. The undertaking was carried out enthusiastically, and the proceeds, which are expected to exceed anticipation, will be applied to the benefit of the Templepatrick Girl Guides.

The Rev. P. Godding's article on "Six Months in a Prisoner of War Camp" and some Reports are held over.

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